



Diabetes and Alcohol (including hypoglycaemia)

Jane Puzey – Clinical Lead Dietitian for Diabetes

Often we get asked about alcohol and what effect that might have on someone's blood glucose levels. So there are different types of alcohol. Some of them are quite low in carbohydrate. They will be things like pure spirits or dry wines, sherry, champagnes, that sort of thing. Alcohols that contain carbohydrate include things such as beers, lagers, ciders, stouts, ales, alcopops, liqueurs, that sort of thing. So it is about having alcohol in moderation.

Lee Ramos – Dietitian with a Special Interest in Diabetes and Child Health

Thinking about alcohol, the number one thing I would highlight is that, firstly it can increase your blood sugars, particularly if it's cider, beer or an alcohol pop. But the other thing is that it can decrease blood sugars. The way our liver works, particularly people taking insulin, it can cause hypoglycaemia. That's the number one thing I would highlight.

Generally with alcohol, I'd recommend the same as the general population that the current for men and women, is to keep within 14 units per week, ideally and having two to three alcohol free days per week.

Jane Puzey – Clinical Lead Dietitian for Diabetes

Something like a pint of standard strength beer or lager or cider would be two units. A small 125ml glass of wine would be about a unit and a half, and a single measure of say a spirit, a pub measure would be about a unit. So trying to stick within 14 units, maximum spread across the week is what we'd be recommending people to have.

Thinking about mixers, obviously if they were going to have, say, a gin and tonic, obviously having a slimline tonic would obviously be better for blood glucose control or if they are going to have something with coke, mix it with diet coke or something with diet lemonade, soda water is carb free so that would be another option.

